

Mabin Summary

In Alan Mabin's Article, *On the Problems and Prospects of Overcoming Segregation and Fragmentation in Southern Africa's Cities in the Postmodern Era*, the devices in which peaceful and productive policy planning is examined. In a post apartheid era, those who are viewed as authority figures, businessmen, and city planners within the South African communities are described as a predominantly homogenous group of well dressed, older white males, and a few women. This description seems to be standard anywhere in the western world. However, South Africa is not exactly considered the western world by geographic standards. Culturally, the European element has taken root some generations ago as the world sought to exploit the vast, untouched resources of the African continent. The group that presents opposition to the imperialistic practices of the previously mentioned group is described as a less formal, less homogenous, grassroots community coalition that seeks to develop the South African economic structure in realistic ways that benefit the overarching population of this region (versus just benefiting those who are part of an elite ruling class).

These community-based organizations (CBO) are comprised of members outside of the traditionally accepted bureaucracy that has dominated authority for the majority of their presence. To those involved in the community based organization and those who subscribe to this particular approach to political change(mainly workers), the groups are simply called "civics". With the aid of advisors who often serve as mediators between the two aforementioned groups, the impact of the civics has been greatly successful in the post apartheid political process as it is involved in numerous aspects of political

participation. Community based organizations basically “unionize” the existing population to execute such acts as massive boycotts on numerous levels of the existing financial infrastructure (i.e. public housing rent, service charges, etc...) . Essentially, taking aim at the pocketbooks of those who are in authority and the ruling class. A large number of the meetings between the CGO’s and local government official have been spent obtaining negotiations between the two groups to end such boycotts.

Meanwhile, despite the emancipatory success obtained by the oppressed population through mass organization that basically took aim at seizing power from the existing regime, the bigger picture was lost in lack of forethought. Once the presence of the opposition was established and recognized as a powerful force, the community organizations were faced with the looming question “Now what?”

The biggest criticism of this movement is that while strong and successful with the execution of an oppositional movement that sought to eliminate the imperialistic powers and practices of a foreign entity that has claimed, exploited, and imprisoned a native population; the direction of progression after the fact was non existent and unclear. Regardless of the lack of planning by emancipatory groups, the awareness of social control through segregation is made greatly aware to the oppressed population and widely unaccepted. Political change is demanded by a popular movement and will continue to be sought despite the consequences to the ruling class.

Ultimately, the moral of the story here is that when dealing with a population that’s sole purpose is to be the subject of long term exploitation by a greater empirical power for financial gain without regard for those who exist within this social structure, one should expect an eventual uprising by the exploited population. It is inevitable. The

events that have taken place in South Africa could be used as a post-industrial/post-modern model for those seeking cheaper manufacturing and services in periphery zones. Long term exploitation has complicated consequences upon an oppressed population.